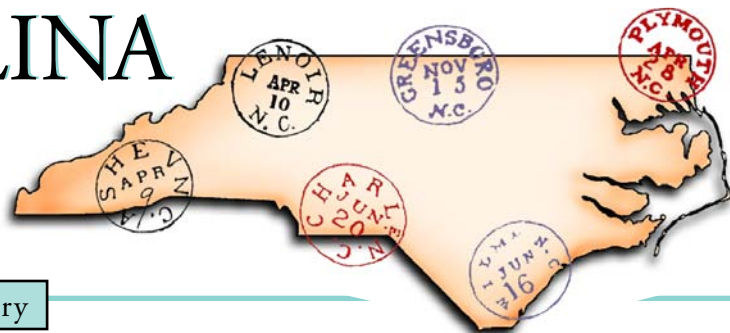


NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

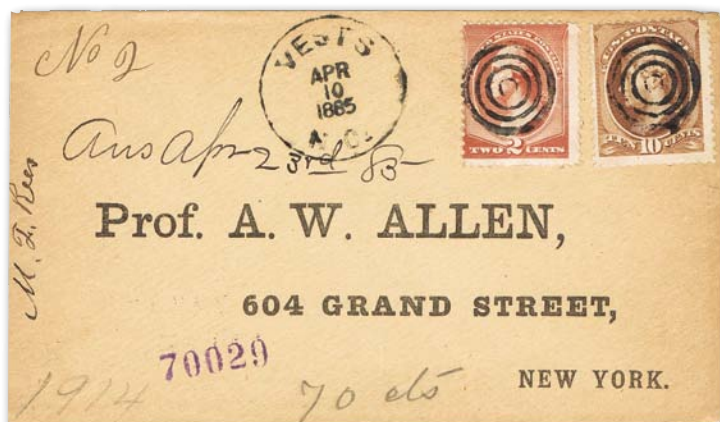
The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

VOLUME 40, NO. 3 SPRING 2021 WHOLE 155



North Carolina Censored, The Story of Civilian Postal Censorship in World War II

Oak Lawn, A Post Office and Landmark of Cabarrus County



Professor A.W. Allen Patent Medicine Orders from Western North Carolina

Affiliate #155 of the American Philatelic Society



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After over 15 months of adapting to the disruptions and restrictions caused by Covid-19 virus, we are finally seeing a gradual return towards carrying our personal and business activities in a more normal way. As I write this message, I'm looking forward to actually enjoying a stamp and coin show in Raleigh in a few weeks and the CHARPEX 2021 Show on July 24 -25 in Charlotte. The location is still in the Worrell Building on the campus of Central Piedmont Community College. The street address is 1201 Elizabeth Avenue, Charlotte, N.C. I anticipate not only a generous amount of interesting material for sale, but also some interesting exhibits. The show will open at 10:00 AM on Saturday. There will be a general meeting of the North Carolina Postal History Society at 1:00 PM, which will include presentations of the A. Earl Weatherly Award for Postal History Research and the North Carolina Postal History Society Literature Award. Following this will be a program entitled "U.S. Domestically Mailed Circulars to 1900," presented by society and board member, Scott Steward. I hope that as many society members as possible can attend the general meeting and program.

Following the general meeting, the NCPHS Board will meet for the annual business meeting at 2:00 PM. The results of the annual meeting will be made available later to the membership. One item of business at the Board meeting will be the selection of a new slate officers of the society for the following two years.

I have had the pleasure and satisfaction of serving as president for the past six years. During that time, I have had

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the opportunity to meet and work with many very knowledgeable and dedicated society members. Our members keep the society and the *North Carolina Postal Historian* growing stronger each year through their involvement, financial support, journal articles, research and helping fellow postal historians in their research and writings. While I have thoroughly enjoyed my term, my time to step down has come. I am confident that the Board will select a qualified and experienced set of officers for the next term. They will be announced in the next issue of the *North Carolina Postal Historian*.

I would like to thank the membership for their support during the past six years. Particularly, I would like to thank the board members and our journal editors, Tony Crumbley and Dick Winter. Dick has consistently guided me through trying to produce readable articles and has been a valued teacher. Tony has been a valuable source of inspiration for articles and carrying out society business.

I hope to see you all at CHARPEX 2021.

A red dot on your mailing label means we have not received your dues.



NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

(Library of Congress No. ISSN 1054-9188.)

Web site www.ncpostalhistory.com

The *North Carolina Postal Historian* is the official journal of the North Carolina Postal History Society. It is published quarterly in January, April, July and October.

Membership in the Society is \$15 per year. Applications for membership may be obtained from the Secretary/Treasurer. Submissions for the *Postal Historian* or inquiries may be addressed to the editors.

President

Charles F. Hall, Jr.
537 Easy Wind Lane
Garner, N.C. 27529
cfhgarner20@charter.net

Vice-President

George Slaton
1230 South Street
Cornelius, NC 28031
geoslaton@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer

Harry Albert
105 Gatestone Court
Cary, N.C. 27518
harry.albert@eeco-net.com

Editors

Tony L. Crumbley
PO Box 681447
Charlotte, NC 28216
tcrumbley@bellsouth.net

Richard F. Winter
5432 Geneva Terrace
Colfax, NC 27235
rwwinter645@gmail.com

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North Carolina Censored

The story of Civilian Postal Censorship in World War II



by Charles F. Hall, Jr.

In 1941, the United States Office of Censorship declared that “The first and last principle to be remembered, then, is that censorship should come into being solely as an instrument of war.” The office further stated that the purpose of censorship was to deprive the enemy of information and to gather intelligence about enemy activities. Another goal of censoring was to manage information to preserve civilian morale. In WWII, as in WWI, civilian and military mails were censored by the belligerent countries, not only the United States.

Postal censorship is a very broad field of study and the author presents a general overview using North Carolina examples to illustrate the story. Postal censorship in WWI was described in a previous *North Carolina Postal Historian* article, “North Carolina in the Great War 1914-1918” (Volume 37, No. 4, Fall, 2018). WWII was the last war that the United States attempted to practice postal censorship on any systematic scale.

This study focuses on the censorship of civilian mail which was sent or received by a civilian source to or from a civilian in another country. During WWII, the Office of Censorship supervised the wartime censoring of U.S. mails and other media. Generally, mail posted by a military serviceman or

servicewoman was censored before it left the military post or ship. Military postal censorship is a separate field of study and outside the scope of this article. After the United States officially entered the war on December 8, 1941, mail going out of the country or entering the country, whether civilian or military, was censored. Not all mail was censored. All registered, transit and airmail was inspected, but the goal set by the Office of Censorship was to inspect only 50% of outgoing surface mail and 25% of surface mail coming into the country. Except for special circumstances, such as mail concerning interned enemy aliens or the Manhattan Project that produced the atomic bomb, mail sent within the continental U.S. was not censored.

After a series of peace conferences in the 1930s failed to secure peace in Europe, Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. By mid-1940, most of Europe was at war. In Europe, only Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and the Republic of Ireland managed to remain neutral or unoccupied.

As soon as the war began in Europe, the combatant countries started censoring civilian and prisoner of war mails going in or out of their countries which included mail to the United States and its territories. British and French colonies, protectorates and dominions also censored international mail. Mail which passed through a belligerent country on its way to a neutral nation was usually censored. This was called “transit mail.” This movement of international mail between belligerent and neutral nations was slow and unreliable because of military operations, transportation interruptions and the limited routes available, which were principally Portugal and to a limited extent, Sweden and Ireland.

Figures 1a and 1b show an envelope and a portion of the reverse sent from Berlin, Germany, to Chapel Hill. This cover was mailed on February 17, 1941, to a professor in the Botany Department at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The 25 pfennig ultramarine stamp commemorated the 1940 Leipzig Spring Trade Fair. Although the United States was still neutral, Germany censored outgoing and incoming international mail, as did also the other belligerents. Both the



◀ ▲ **Figures 1a and 1b.** February 17, 1941, Berlin to Chapel Hill, censored in Germany. Red “Oberkommando Der Wehrmacht, (OKW)” military high command handstamp on reverse validated the paper seal “Geprüft” or “checked” sealing tape.

front and the reverse have the magenta and red “Oberkommando Der Wehrmacht, (OKW)” military high command handstamps. The one on the reverse is used to validate the paper seal “Geprüft” or “inspected” seal.

Prior to and during the war, the U.S. Postal Service was the primary means of communication, both domestic and international. There were transatlantic cables for telegraph and telephone service, but they were expensive and not always reliable. Even routine military official correspondence was sent through the U.S. mail. Until 1939 trans-Atlantic mail was sent by ship, but the first regular transatlantic airmail service started in 1939, when Pan American Airways (PAA) introduced a massive long-range seaplane, the Boeing 314. This innovative aircraft was primarily designed for passenger service, but because it had the range and cargo capacity to handle large quantities of mail, the U.S. Postal Service contracted with PAA to establish Foreign Air Mail Route No. 18 (FAM 18). On this route, PAA used four Boeing 314s, called the “Yankee Clipper,” the “Dixie Clipper,” the “Atlantic Clipper” and the “American Clipper.” The first regular clipper flight carrying 1,800 pounds of mail was on May 20, 1939. Figure No. 2 illustrates the impressive and ground breaking Boeing 314 clipper. Figures 3 and 4 are examples of transatlantic clipper mail.

Figure 3 illustrates an early wartime cover to London, England, from Charlotte, posted on April 27, 1940, and paid with 30¢ in stamps. On the front was a block of four, 1940 3¢ bright red lilac Luther Burbank stamps of the American Scientists series and on the reverse, a block of six, 1940 3¢ light violet stamps honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Pan American Union. The cover was sent by transatlantic airmail, which meant going from New York to Portugal with a stop at Bermuda (or sometimes Trinidad in the British West Indies) and the Azores. The manuscript “Via Clipper” meant it was carried by a Boeing 314 clipper. It was not censored as was often the case. It could have entered the British mails through neutral Ireland.

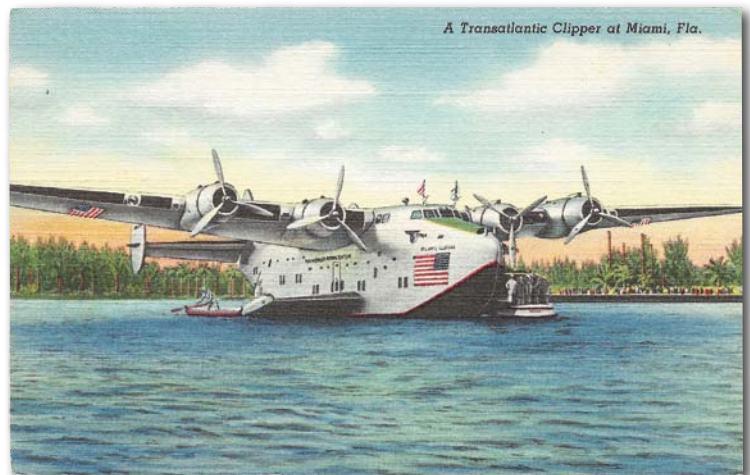
Mailed from Durham on July 8, 1940, to North Bridport, Dorset, England, Figures 4a and 4b show the front and a

portion of the reverse of an airmail cover that was opened and examined by a British censor. Part of the sealing tape on the front that would have covered the right-hand stamp has been lost, but this tape, P.C. 90/OPENED BY EXAMINER 1245, was one that had been used in London and later was taken to Bermuda when the examiner was transferred there, supporting the conclusion that the cover was censored at Bermuda. The stamps were cancelled with the 30.5 mm black Duke Station Type 3 duplex canceler.

PAA inaugurated trans-Pacific airmail on November 22, 1935, and on September 1, 1939, started flying the Boeing 314 clipper to carry trans-Pacific mail and passengers on regular routes from San Francisco to China, New Zealand, Singapore, the Fiji Islands and the Philippines, via Hawaii and other U.S.-owned Pacific Island way points. On this route, PAA flew the “Hawaii Clipper,” the “Samoa Clipper,” the “Philippine Clipper” and the “China Clipper.” The belligerent nations on the PAA transpacific air route prior to the U.S. entry into the war were China and New Zealand, which could have handled transit airmail to Australia. The author did not locate prewar censored mail from China, New Zealand or Australia that went through the U.S. mail, although there was certainly airmail traffic. Overseas mail from other Pacific countries and European colonies traveled by ship or through a roundabout route through other Asian or European countries.

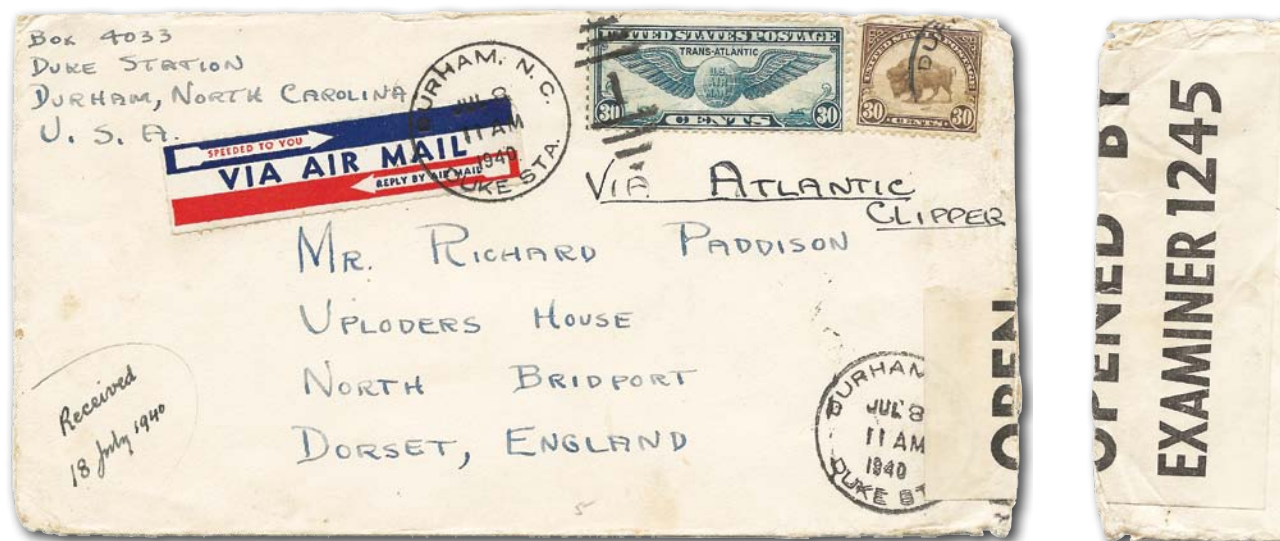
Overseas civilian mail during wartime was subject to delays, re-rerouting and sometimes could not be delivered at all. Mail was not exchanged directly between countries at war with each other but transited through neutral nations. The United States was officially neutral, from September 3, 1939, to December 8, 1941. The Neutrality Acts of 1935 and 1937 prohibited PAA from flying into the nations at war. Civilian surface overseas mail traveled by ship and transatlantic airmail went by PAA, which operated several routes, one of the most important being the New York to Lisbon, Portugal, route. Portugal was able to stay neutral during the entire war and was a clearing house for commerce between the warring nations. Fans of the 1943 classic film “Casablanca” will remember that the

Figure 2. ▶
Pan American Airways (PAA) long-range seaplane, Boeing 314, started transatlantic mail service on Foreign Mail Route (FAM) No. 18 with four aircraft called “clippers.” Their first flight was in May 1939 carrying 1,800 pounds of U.S. mail from New York to Lisbon via the Azores.





◀ **Figure 3.** April 27, 1940, cover from Charlotte to London, endorsed "Via Clipper," and carried by a Pan American Airways Boeing 314 seaplane from New York to Lisbon via the Azores. It was paid the 30¢ airmail rate with a block of four 3¢ stamps on the front and a block of six 3¢ stamps on the reverse.



▲ **Figures 4a and 4b.** July 8, 1940, airmail cover from the Duke Station in Durham to North Bridport, Dorset, England, endorsed "Via Atlantic Clipper" and paid 60¢ for a double weight. A portion of the reverse that show the British sealing tape is at the right. Part of this tape on the front that would have covered the right-hand stamp has been lost, but this tape, P.C. 90/ OPENED BY EXAMINER 1245, was one that had been used in London and later taken to Bermuda when the examiner was transferred there, supporting the conclusion that the cover was censored at Bermuda.

protagonists were trying to procure letters of transit to the safe haven of Lisbon. After France surrendered to Germany on June 22, 1940, Lisbon became the only point that mail could be sent to continental Europe. A diplomatic strain developed between the United States and Britain when clipper flights that landed in Bermuda had the mail examined by British censors. The United States regarded this as a violation of its neutrality. PAA stopped landings in Bermuda temporarily to prevent British censorship of American mail.

The United States was officially neutral until Congress declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the previous day. Bound by their Axis treaty with Japan, German and Italy declared war on the United States on December 11, 1941. During the period of U.S. neutrality between September 3, 1939, and December 8, 1941, there was no censorship of civilian mails by the U.S. government. Mail left the country uninspected, however incoming mail was censored by the foreign countries at war.



◀ **Figure 5a.** April 9, 1940, cover sent from Leipzig, Germany to Meredith College Library in Raleigh as an airmail letter, paid with 105 pfennige in stamps. The thin paper envelope was encased in cellophane as it had been damaged during the censorship handling.

Figure 5b. ▶

The reverse of the envelope showing its encasement in cellophane. A “Geöffnet” paper sealing tape closes the cellophane and is tied by a violet OKW handstamp. This is an unusual and perhaps unique censored cover because of this treatment to protect the envelope damaged during the censorship process.



Figures 5 through 9 show mail censored by foreign governments prior to the U.S. entry into the war. Figures 5a and 5b illustrate the front and reverse of an airmail cover mailed on April 9, 1940, from Leipzig, in Saxony, Germany, to the Meredith College Library, in Raleigh, as indicated by the “Mit Luftpost/Par Avion” label. The letter was opened at Frankfurt for censoring and resealed inside another cellophane enclosure. A “Geöffnet” (or “opened”) paper sealing tape on the reverse closed the cellophane, which was tied with another violet OKW handstamp. According to correspondence between WWII civilian censorship experts Horst Landsmann and Dann Mayo, who have examined this cover, this is the only censored cover from Germany seen by them where the censored item was placed inside cellophane, then sealed with paper tape and tied by a handstamp on the cellophane. It is a very unusual, possibly a unique example.

As stated earlier, postal censorship did not start in the United States until war was declared on Japan on December 8, 1941.

The cover illustrated in Figures 6a and a portion of the reverse, Figure 6b, is a November 13, 1940, airmail cover from Petah Tiqva, Palestine, to the medical school at Wake Forest in Wake County. (In 1941, the school accepted an offer to move to Winston-Salem because of a large donation from the Bowman Gray family to a medical school that would move to Winston-Salem.) Palestine at the time was a British Mandate, so the cover was inspected by a British censor. The pink sealing tape covering the left edge of the envelope that had been opened for examination was printed, “P.C. 22/OPENED BY/ CENSOR./70 8833.” The tape was tied to the envelope by a purple Palestine control handstamp. Other common printed sealing tape were numbered were P.C. 90 and P.C. 66.

The Union of South Africa was part of the British Empire and therefore, also at war with the Axis powers. Figure 7 shows a censored cover posted on April 17, 1941, almost eight months before the United States entered the war. This cover, posted to Raleigh from Ladybrand, was opened, examined and



Figures 6a and 6b. ▲

November 13, 1940, cover from Petah Tiqva, Palestine, to the medical school at Wake Forest in Wake County, paid 125 milliemmes in stamps. The printed pink sealing tape used on the left side of this envelope and carried over to the cover's reverse was a British censor a Type "P.C. 22" tape. It was tied to the cover by a purple control handstamp used in Palestine.



◀ **Figure 7.** April 17, 1941, Censored cover from Ladybrand, Union of South Africa, to Raleigh, paid 3 pence in South African stamps. The cover was opened, examined and resealed on the left edge with a printed paper tape in red, DEUR SENSOR/OOPGEMAAK./OPENED BY/ CENSOR, in both Afrikaans and English.

resealed on the left edge with the censor's paper tape that was printed "OPENED BY/CENSOR." in two languages, English and Afrikaans.

Figures 8a and 8b on the next page show the front and reverse of a dual-censored cover that pre-dates the United States entry into the war. The cover was mailed on May 12, 1941, from Charlotte to Lübeck, Germany. A handwritten notation in the upper left corner, "Via Transatlantic Air Mail," the small blue "Par Avion/By Air Mail" label and the 30¢ stamp payment indicated the sender wanted the cover to go by airmail

to Germany. It was carried by a PAA clipper to Bermuda, where the cover was opened, examined by a British censor and resealed with P.C. 90/OPENED BY/EXAMINER 3244 paper sealing tape, and then sent on by clipper to Lisbon, Portugal. It then most likely went by the German airline Lufthansa to Germany. After it entered the German mail system, it was opened again, as evidenced by the black straight-line "geöffnet" paper sealing tape on the reverse. The printed paper tape also had two black OKW circular markings of the Frankfurt post office, denoted by the small Gothic letter "e" in the lower



◀ **Figure 8a.** May 12, 1941, cover from Charlotte to Lübeck, Germany, paid 30¢ for airmail service. It was carried by clipper to Bermuda, where it was opened the first time by a British censor and resealed with P.C. 90/OPENED BY/ EXAMINER 3244 paper sealing tape.

Figure 8b. ▶ Reverse of cover in Figure 8a showing censorship a second time in Germany. At Frankfurt, where paper sealing tape with printed circular OKW markings and small gothic letter “e” in the lower portion of the markings was applied, it was opened and inspected a second time, then validated with a red handstamp showing two circular OKW “Geprüft” markings in six horizontal lines.



portion of the marking. After applying the paper sealing tape the German censor approved the contents with a handstamp in red showing two circular “Geprüft” markings in six horizontal lines. There are three additional penciled individual censor notations on the front.

The well-traveled cover illustrated in Figures 9a and 9b eluded the British, but not the German censors. It was posted on October 16, 1941, at Wadesboro to go by airmail to Dittersdorf on the Chemnitz River in Saxony. The manuscript “Air Mail” as well as the red straight line VIA AIR MAIL” handstamp meant it was to be carried by the Boeing 314 clipper. The cover lacks British censorship markings. It likely entered the European mails at Lisbon, Portugal, and was flown to Germany on a Lufthansa flight. The German markings on the reverse confirm that the letter was received at the Frankfurt Post Office (small “e” in the OKW paper seal) and was opened and inspected. The three small boxes in black with numbers on the reverse are individual German censor marks called “Prüfvermerk.” Each means a different censor/inspector/examiner had some role in handling this cover. The pencil notations on the bottom are often encountered as additional, individual censor markings in some German censor examination

stations, notably Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Lyon in occupied France and others.

After the United States declaration of war, mail sent out or into the country from overseas, both civilian and military, was censored. Overseas military mail was sent to servicemen through a system of Army Post Offices (APOs), Fleet Post Offices (FPOs) and Base Post Offices (BSOs.) Overseas civilian mail was sent through the PAA. Later in the war the PAA transoceanic aircraft and facilities were placed under military control until the war was over and the military also established a large fleet of transport aircraft to carry mail. As a rule, international mail was censored but domestic mail was not. There were some special exceptions, such as the Manhattan Project (the Atomic Bomb.) One other special case was that the mail of many Japanese, German and Italian non-U.S. citizens living or interned in the country, who were called “Enemy Aliens,” was opened and inspected for information useful to the enemy and to detect spies or security risks.

A striking cover, unexpectedly caught up when mail services were abruptly stopped by the war between the United States and Germany, is illustrated in Figures 10 and 10a. Mailed on November 29, 1941, from Charlotte to Königsberg in East

Figure 9a. ▶

October 16, 1941, envelope from Wadesboro to Dittersdorf on the Chemnitz River in Saxony, Germany, paid 30¢ for airmail service. It was not censored by the British. It likely entered the European mails at Lisbon and was sent to Germany via Spain and occupied France or by a German Lufthansa aircraft from Lisbon to Germany.



◀ **Figure 9b.** The cover's reverse shows it was censored at Frankfurt, receiving the printed paper sealing tape with "Geöffnet" printed on it. Three small black boxes with numbers are individual German censor marks called "Prüfvermark."



▲ **Figures 10a and 10b.** November 29, 1941, cover from Charlotte to Königsberg in East Prussia, paid 30¢ for airmail, apparently went no further than PAA to Bermuda, where it was opened and inspected by a British censor. With the United States just entering the war and the cover was returned to New York. It was returned to Charlotte with a machine cancel "RETURN/TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED," eight months after the envelope had been originally mailed.

Prussia, it would normally have traveled by PAA clipper from New York to Lisbon, transiting Bermuda or Trinidad in the process. In this case, it apparently only went as far as Bermuda, where it was opened, inspected and resealed by a British censor. Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the U.S. declared war on Japan the next day. After Pearl Harbor and the United States declaration of war on Japan, Germany, bound by

the Tripartite Pact with Italy and Japan, declared war on the United States on December 11, 1941. The cover did not have time to travel from Charlotte to Lisbon and on to Germany before December 11, 1941. The British opened and examined the cover resealing it with their "P.C. 90 OPENED BY/EXAMINER 2011" paper label. It was returned to the United States and was mailed from New York on August 7, 1942, back

to Charlotte using a machine canceler "RETURN/TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED," over eight months after the letter had been originally mailed!

Even though the United States declared neutrality at the beginning of the war and public opinion was strongly against involvement in another foreign war, some government authorities foresaw that the United States would eventually become involved in both the European and Pacific conflicts. Relations with Japan had been strained over Japanese expansionism in China and subsequent American embargoes on strategic materials to Japan. To improve readiness for possible involvement, the army and navy were expanded and as early as 1939, the military services set up schools to train military officers for future censorship operations.

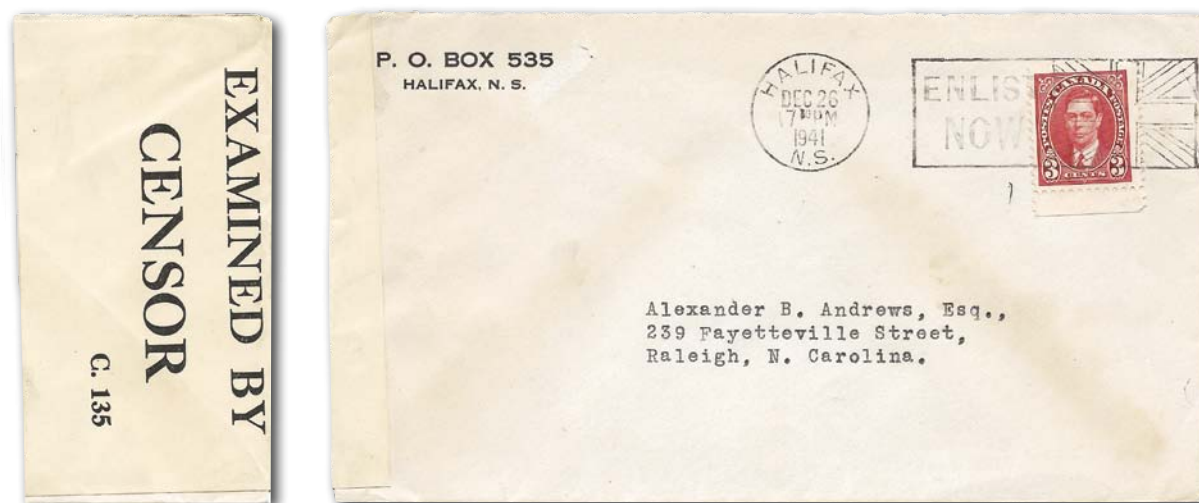
Almost immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, steps were taken to begin censorship in the United States. On December 8, President Franklin D. Roosevelt granted authority to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to manage on a temporary basis all phases of the censorship program. Mr. Hoover convened a conference of the government agencies that would be involved. Out of that conference evolved the Office of Censorship. By December 19, 1941, President Roosevelt had appointed a Director of Censorship, signed Executive Orders formally establishing the Office of Censorship and established controls over international communications and voluntary censorship of press and broadcasting.

Actual censoring had begun by the War Department based on pre-war planning by December 13, 1941. The success of the program was assisted by the patriotic and voluntary cooperation of the people and the press, who generally supported the restrictions as a wartime necessity. On January 15, 1942, the Office of Censorship issued "The Code of Wartime Practices

for the American Press," and military authorities provided servicemen with guidelines to restrict the spread of unauthorized material.

The Office of Censorship eventually had over 10,000 employees and operated five divisions: The Postal Division, the Cable Division, the Broadcasting Division, the Print Media Division and a Technical Operations Division. Under the Postal Division, postal field stations were set up to actually open and examine the mails. By February 1943, postal field stations were located in New York, Miami, New Orleans, San Antonio, Laredo, Brownsville, El Paso, Nogales (Arizona), Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, San Juan (Puerto Rico), Charlotte Amalie (U.S. Virgin Islands), Honolulu and two sites in the Panama Canal Zone: Balboa and Christobal. Mail entering the U.S. or being mailed to foreign countries, was collected and processed at these field postal stations. Figures 11 through 16 illustrate mail censored after the U.S. entered the war. The Office of Censorship also set up Traveler's Censorship units in some ports and border crossings. Their purpose was to examine traveler's documents that included mail that was carried both within and outside of the U.S. Mail.

Figures 11a and 11b show the front and a portion of the reverse of a letter from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Raleigh posted on December 26, 1941, only 19 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Nova Scotia was a Canadian province. The Dominion of Canada, as a member of the British Commonwealth, voted to join Great Britain in the war against the Axis countries. The United States, Canada and Britain worked together to coordinate their censorship systems during the war through The Tripartite Agreement. The reverse shows the mail was opened, examined and resealed with a Canadian resealing tape type C. 135. Notice that the stamp is tied with a black rectangular machine cancel



▲ **Figures 11a and 11b.** December 26, 1941, cover from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Raleigh. Cover opened and censored in Halifax, then seal with a printed sealing tape, "EXAMINED BY/CENSOR/C. 135. Note the postage stamp is canceled with a black rectangular machine cancel with the slogan "ENLIST/NOW."



▲ **Figures 12a and 12b.** 1942 airmail cover from Bogota, Columbia, to the Duke University Library, paid 35½ centavos. Cover censored at Miami after entering U.S. mails at Cristobal Canal Zone. A Miami sealing tape No. 1938 was used to close the opened envelope.



▲ **Figures 13a and 13b.** 1943 registered airmail cover from Montevideo, Uruguay, to the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston-Salem, paid 153 centesimos in stamps. The envelope was opened and resealed at Trinidad with a British P.C. 90/OPENED BY EXAMINER/I.E./8056 paper resealing tape, "I.E." indicating Trinidad.

with the slogan "Enlist Now." Halifax was an important port where many transatlantic convoys formed to carry troops and materials across the North Atlantic to England.

An airmail letter from Bogota, Columbia, to the Duke University Library in 1942 is shown in Figures 12a and 12b, a portion of the reverse of the cover. There is a manuscript notation, "Via Cristobal" on the left top. Cristobal is a port in the Colon District of Panama. The letter entered the U.S. mails

at Cristobal, in the Panama Canal Zone. It was censored at Miami, where paper sealing tape No. 1938 was used to close the envelope. Columbia was neutral, but all mails entering U.S. territory had to be censored. The small perforated stamp in the lower left corner signifies a donation had been made in Columbia to the Anti-Tuberculosis Foundation.

Figure 13 illustrates a 1943 registered airmail letter from Montevideo, Uruguay, to the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company



◀ **Figure 14.** June 24, 1943 cover from Algiers, the capital and largest city in Algeria, to the Women's College in Greensboro, later to be re-directed to Baltimore, Maryland. Letter paid 4F50 for a weight of 20-40 gms. (50 centimes overpayment). It was censored by the French as this was a French colony under Vichy Government control and resealed with unmarked cellophane tape.

Figure 15a. ▶ April 3, 1945 registered airmail cover from U.S. Embassy in Asunción, Paraguay, to Winston-Salem, paid 85 centimos in stamps. It was censored at Miami with a printed cellophane sealing tape "EXAMINED BY/30612."



◀ **Figure 15b.** Reverse of cover showing arrival at Miami on April 9 and Winston-Salem on April 11, 1945. This cover also was sent to the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston-Salem.

in Winston Salem. Because it was foreign mail, it was censored. The envelope was opened and resealed at Trinidad with a British P.C. 90/OPENED BY EXAMINER/I.E./8056 paper resealing tape, "I.E." indicating Trinidad.

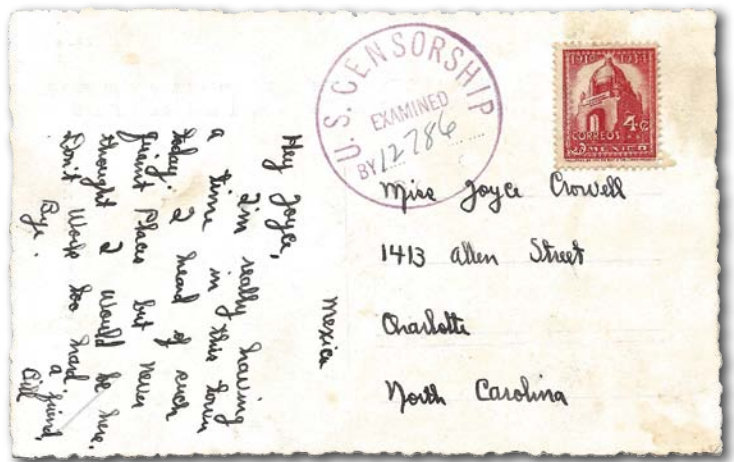
A June 24, 1943, envelope from Algiers, to the Women's College, University of North Carolina in Greensboro and later redirected to a Baltimore, Maryland, is illustrated in Figure 14. Algeria was a French colony administered at this time by the Vichy Government in the German unoccupied part of France.

The letter was mailed from Algiers, the capital. It was opened and examined and resealed with unmarked censor's cellophane tape on the left side.

Figures 15 and 15a show another example of wartime correspondence between South America and the R.J. Reynold Tobacco Company in Winston Salem. This registered, airmail cover was sent from the U.S. Embassy in Asunción, Paraguay on April 3, 1945. It arrived in Miami on April 9, 1945, paid with 85 centimos in four Paraguayan stamps (printed in London). It

Figure 16. ►

Undated post card after December 7, 1941, from Mexico to Charlotte was paid with a 1934 carmine, Mexican 4 centavos stamp, but received no datestamp nor cancel of the postage stamp. The circular, magenta censor handstamp with the identification number of "12786" has four faintly struck "O"s at the bottom indicating it was applied at the Laredo, Texas, field censor station, a scarce censor marking.



was opened, examined and resealed with a cellophane tape by censor No. 30612 in Miami. Cellophane tape was used later in the war to reseal envelopes because paper tape could obscure part of the address. The letter arrived in Winston-Salem on 11 April 1945.

Shown in Figure 16 is an undated post card paid from Mexico to Charlotte, North Carolina. It was paid with a 1934 carmine, Mexican 4 centavos stamp, but received no postmark or killer, yet it entered the U.S. mails at some time after December 7, 1941. The circular, magenta censor handstamp with the identification number of "12786" has four faintly struck "O"s at the bottom indicating it was applied at the Laredo, Texas, field censor station. Censor markings from Laredo are scarce.

The importance of controlling sensitive information is illustrated by two examples. On June 7, 1942, *The Chicago Tribune* published information that the United States had broken one of Japan's most secret communication codes, the Purple Code. This information should never have been released to the public. Later in June 1943, a U.S. congressman disclosed that Japanese depth charges were set too shallow. As a result the U.S. Navy estimated that up to 10 U.S. submarines were lost because of this security breach.

In the United States, mail was examined by individual censors who had unique numbers assigned to them. The censors opened envelopes, examined the contents and resealed the covers with paper and later, cellophane, tape, usually with the censor's number. Some mail, such as post cards that did not require opening, was stamped with a round censor stamp, which usually contained the censor's unique number and characters that identified the field postal station. Mail that contained sensitive information could be returned to the sender or referred to the Technical Operations Division for further analysis and disposition.

In summary, international mail between the United States and the nations at war was censored by those belligerent countries after WWII started in September 1939. The United States was officially neutral for over two years, but mail to and from the United States was still censored by the Allied or Axis

countries. When the United States entered the war the Office of Censorship was established to regulate censorship of civilian mail in and out of the country, while the military services operated their own censorship programs. PAA operated both transatlantic and transpacific airmail routes which were later placed under military administration. Mail was not delivered directly between nations at war but instead transited through neutral countries, the most important being Lisbon, Portugal. Some international mail was censored twice, both at the country of origin and the country where it was delivered. If the mail was forwarded or transited through other countries additional censor markings would be added. There is a known example of one cover that was censored by six countries. World War II officially ended on September 2, 1945, when the Japanese government surrendered to the victorious Allies on the deck of the U.S.S. *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. The German government had already surrendered on May 8, 1945. The Office of Censorship ordered that censorship of mail, press and radio be stopped on August 15, 1945. Executive Order 9631 officially terminated the Office of Censorship on November 15, 1945. The military services ceased their censorship activities on or about September 2, 1945. Censorship by Allied military authorities continued for several years after the war in the occupied zones of Germany and until the 1950s in Austria. That censorship included mail to and from the United States from these occupied zones, but this was limited in scope. True to its mission statement of 1941, the Office of Censorship was established as a temporary instrument of war and when the war was over, censorship within the United States ceased.

There is an amazing variety of collectable censored mail from many nations and historical periods available for reasonable prices. All have the potential for interesting stories.

Note: The author would like to give a special thanks to Dann Mayo, Publication Editor of the *Military Postal History Society Bulletin* for technical information, editorial assistance and for identifying and authenticating a rare and unusual German censored cover treatment discussed in this article. ■

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Mystery Cover



Last issue's Mystery Cover featured this envelope which was sent to Allegan (Allegan County), Michigan, and paid the 3-cent rate with three 1861 blue 1-cent stamps, each canceled with blue ink pen strokes.

The question to be answered was to determine the post office of origin.

Two NCPHS members, Greg Stone and Ken Miller, provided correct answers to our question. The cover was posted in **Manlius, Allegan County, Michigan**.

Greg was the first person to our knowledge, to respond to one of our mystery covers who provided actual visual proof of his evaluation. He sent scans of two other covers from the same correspondence and in the same postmaster's hand. Shown here is one of the two covers. If the unknown year of use for each was the same, the mailing dates were only seven days apart!



Oak Lawn

A Post Office and Landmark of Cabarrus County

by George Slaton

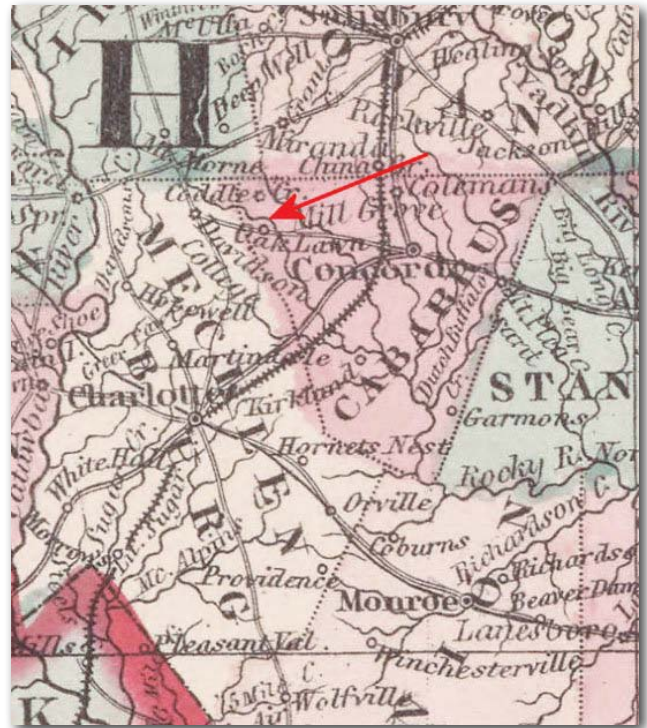


Cannon Crossing is, as its name suggests, a crossroads in the extreme western portion of Cabarrus County, North Carolina, less than a mile from its border with Mecklenburg County. Just a couple of decades ago, Cannon Crossing was a remote and quiet conjunction of Poplar Tent and Harris Roads. A friend of mine, a native of nearby Concord, recalls those serene afternoons in the 1950s when he and his father, enjoying a leisurely drive in the countryside, would stop at Cannon's Store at the crossing for a cold Nehi.

Today Cannon Crossing is no longer an isolated rural intersection. The stoplight there manages an ever-increasing flow of heavy traffic. During the morning or late afternoon week-day rush, the traffic sometimes backs up a half-mile or so in each direction. A shopping mall, complete with a grocery store, banks, restaurants, and gas stations occupies one corner of the crossing while a medical center fills another. A third corner features a real estate sign indicating that its land is "Available." The northwest corner of the crossing and its historic building which served as a post office is the subject of this article. Figure 1 shows the location of Oak Lawn as it appeared in an 1860 map of North and South Carolina from a Johnson's Family Atlas.

The friend who enjoyed an afternoon Nehi six decades ago is Alex Porter whose various family lines have deep roots in Cabarrus County. Alex knows his county's history thoroughly and is indeed one of those individuals who can rightly be called a local historian. A year or two ago, Alex told me about the Oak

Lawn property and its uncertain future, but at the time I was aware of neither its family ownership nor of its significance to postal history.



▲ **Figure 1.** In the northwest corner of today's Cannon Crossing in western Cabarrus County is the historic property of Oak Lawn which served as a post office from 1849 until 1866. The red arrow shows Oak Lawn on this excerpt from an 1860 *Johnson's Family Atlas* of North and South Carolina.



▲ **Figure 2.** Oak Lawn, for the moment, stands forlorn and alone on the hillside today. It was constructed about 1836 by Dr. Edwin R. Harris, its resident and postmaster.

So when Alex mentioned recently that Oak Lawn had been a post office, I jumped at his invitation to tour the property. We met at the shopping center at Cannon Crossing, crossed Harris Road, and walked up the hill to the site. On the way, we passed several bulldozers and trod over freshly turned red clay. The Oak Lawn property is now under development with nearly 200 homes planned for the site. Oak Lawn, for the moment, stands forlorn and alone on the hillside, the surrounding vegetation now cleared away. Fortunately, the developer intends for the structure to be preserved, and the present plan is to carefully dismantle Oak Lawn and then faithfully reconstruct it somewhere within the county. (see Figure 2)

As Alex and I entered Oak Lawn's cool interior, it was readily apparent that the house, though showing its decades of use, is structurally sound. The thick boards with which the house was framed are sturdy and strong. The original doors, wide floorboards, and ornamental mantels are evidence that the house has been well-preserved. Oak Lawn is indeed a historic treasure.

It should be noted that, though Oak Lawn is a hundred and eighty-five years old, it occupies a site with additional historical significance. Captain Samuel W. Pickens (1743-1821), thought to be a first cousin of General Andrew Pickens of South Carolina Revolutionary War fame, settled here about 1749 when he is known to have married Jane Carrigan of Mecklenburg County.

Israel Pickens (1780-1827), one of the Pickens' nine children, was to become an important public figure not only in his native state, but also in the newly settled Alabama. (see Figure 3) After receiving an excellent education at a local classical academy and at Jefferson College in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, where he graduated in 1802, the young Israel Pickens opened a law practice in Morganton, North Carolina. Politically gifted, he served in the North Carolina legislature and then as United States Congressman in the nation's capital from 1811 until 1817. But soon Pickens moved to St. Stephens in the Alabama Territory. By 1819, Alabama was a state, and Pickens founded its first banking institution, the Tombigbee Bank. He was elected the third governor of Alabama, served from 1821 until 1825, and was considered a popular and effective executive. Then tragedy struck. Elected to the United States Senate, his term and his life were cut short after he contracted tuberculosis. Pickens died in 1827 at the age of 49. If he had lived a longer life, his name might have become a much more famous one, but, sadly, the Pickens family's presence in Cabarrus County is virtually for-

gotten today. The local historians, Adelaide and Eugenia Lore, reported in 1971 that the "Pickens family cemetery was long ago destroyed."

Oak Lawn is featured in an excellent architectural history of Cabarrus County, authored by Peter R. Kaplan. The house was constructed about 1836 by Dr. Edwin R. Harris (1808-1869). Kaplan describes it as a "two-story single pile house" with "an unusual five-bay facade division on both stories." The house "retains most of its significant transitional Federal-Greek Revival interior details." These include "an open string stair" and three fireplace mantels, two with "delicate Federal proportions." Oak Lawn is a home one might expect of a medical doctor and the owner of thirty slaves, as indicated in the 1860 Census.

Oak Lawn was an appropriate location for a post office, serving in that capacity from 1849-1866. Dr. Harris, the house's owner and the postmaster, was well known in the wider community for the medical care he provided. The house, standing prominently on a ridge, above the crossroads and within sight of Rocky River, was a well-known landmark in the western portion of Cabarrus County. The surrounding neighborhood was part of a long-settled community concentrated around Poplar Tent Presbyterian Church, founded in 1764 and only four miles away.

The only recorded cover bearing the Oak Lawn postmark is illustrated in Figure 4. It is an 1850 stampless folded cover with no contents, but docketed "19 Feb 1850." The cover, docketed on receipt "New/\$3," appears to have included payment of three dollars for a subscription. The simple postmark reads, "Oak Lawn/Feb 19." Though the subscriber's name, "W.S. Pharr," is docketed, it appears that the cover was mailed by Dr. Harris, the postmaster, as evidenced by the "Free/PM," indicating that he sent the letter, with his postmaster's privi-



◀ **Figure 3.** North Carolina Historical Marker at the intersection of North Carolina Highway 73 and Odell School Road in Cabarrus County. Israel Pickens, who would eventually become the third governor of Alabama, was born on the property later known as Oak Lawn.

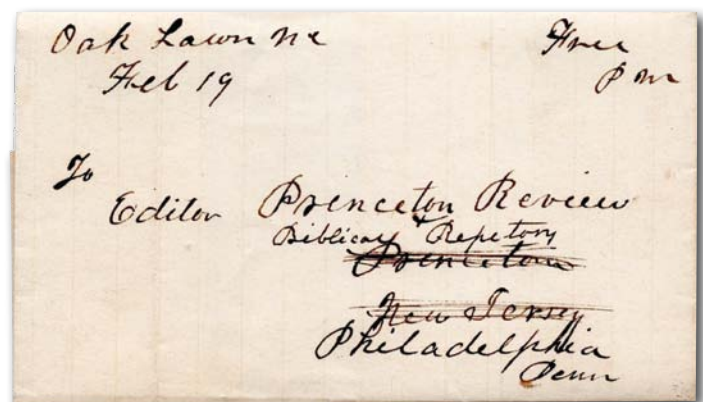


Figure 4. ▶

Only recorded cover mailed from the Oak Lawn post office (1849-1866), a stampless folded cover with no content but docketed "19 Feb 1850." It is postmarked "Oak Lawn N C/ Feb 19" and franked with "Free/PM" indicating that the postmaster used his free franking privilege to send the letter.



◀ **Figure 5.** Gravestone of Walter Smiley Pharr (1790-1866) in the cemetery of Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church in northeast Mecklenburg County. Pharr, a Presbyterian minister, helped establish the church in 1824. The stampless cover in Figure 4 conveyed his subscription to *The Princeton Review* in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Figure 6. ▶ September 23, 186x, Confederate patriotic cover with a vertical pair of 5 cents blue stamps printed in London. Its circular date stamp indicates that it was mailed from Winchester, Virginia, to the "Oak Lawn" post office in Cabarrus County, North Carolina. (Collection of Richard Wines)



lege, without charge. It is possible that Dr. Harris, like many of his Cabarrus family members, was Presbyterian and purchased the subscription as a gift for Pharr. The mailing address on the front panel reads "Editor Princeton Review/Trenton/New Jersey." This has been altered to "Biblical Repertory" (sic) /Philadelphia/Penn." This periodical was a theological journal published from 1825 to 1888 and was known variously as *The Princeton Review* and *The Biblical Repertory*.

The new subscriber was Walter Smiley Pharr (1790-1866). It is not surprising that Pharr subscribed to a theological journal because, in 1850, he was an ordained pastor serving both Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church and Ramah Presbyterian Church, both within seven miles of the Oak Lawn post office. A native of a section of Mecklenburg County which in 1794 became Cabarrus County, Pharr attended Hampton-Sydney College in Farmville, Virginia, from 1810 until 1812 and subsequently studied theology privately under Moses Drury Hoge, one of the leading academics in his denomination. The Reverend Walter Pharr spent most of his 46-year ministry in Cabarrus and Mecklenburg Counties. He was one of the principal organizers of Davidson College. Pharr is buried in the churchyard at Mallard Creek Presbyterian Church which was established under his leadership in 1829. (see Figure 5)

A second cover available for our study is one to which the Oak Lawn post office was its destination. (see Figure 6) This Confederate patriotic cover bears a "Winchester VA/Sep 23" circular datestamp and is franked with a vertical pair of 5 cents blue London printed stamps. It is addressed to "Mrs. Sarah E. Sloan/Oak Lawn/Cabarrus County, N.C." The cover features an illustration of an eleven-star flag and a patriotic verse. It was produced by "(Sold) by J.W. Randolph, Richm'd," printed on the left edge.

It is interesting how the study of postal covers from the distant past provides a window to a place which survives into the present and to people who survive in the historical record.

Author's Note: I am grateful to three persons without whom this article would hold far less information and interest. Alex Porter, who has taken a large role in preserving this historic property, provided a personal tour. Ken Orndorff, the conscientious developer of this site, has made a generous financial contribution for Oak Lawn's preservation. Bobbie Cannon Motley, whose family resided at Oak Lawn for generations and exercised a careful stewardship of its history, has written 116 newspaper reminiscences of her life there and in the surrounding community. ■

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Professor A.W. Allen Patent Medicine Orders from Western North Carolina

by Scott Steward



During the 19th century, medical providers were often uncommon in small rural communities. In order to fill this need, there were many mail-order patent medicine producers who promised cures for a wide number of problems and diseases. Advertisements in newspapers of the day promised cures for everything from baldness to cancer. While many of these products were at best ineffective, some also had the potential to be harmful or addictive.

One example of a patent medicine was produced and sold by Professor A.W. Allen. While relatively uncommon in the US today, during the 19th century and before, humans infected by entozoan or intestinal worms, such as tapeworms, flat worms, or nematodes was a relatively common illness. Depending upon the parasite, people could become infected through eating undercooked meats, drinking contaminated water, or walking bare foot on soil in which the worms lived. Professor Allen's product was often referred to as Sweet Worm Wafers or Allen's Anthelmintic. The business was established in 1873 and sold to both drug stores as well as directly to customers. The product is purported to have killed the worms in a matter of a few hours. Professor Allen frequently advertised his cure in newspapers. His ads often specifically mentioned tapeworms as a specialty.

A cover mailed on July 21, 1882 to Professor Allen from North Cove is shown in Figure 1. The North Cove post office was opened in 1827 in Burke County, but became part of the newly formed McDowell County in 1842. North Cove post office discontinued operation in 1954. The cover was postmarked with a previously unreported 28 mm double-rimmed circular datestamp and a grid cancel was used to cancel the stamp. The letter was mailed at the 3¢ first-class letter rate. The cover also

has a pen notation by Professor Allen's office indicating the letter was answered on July 24, 1882.

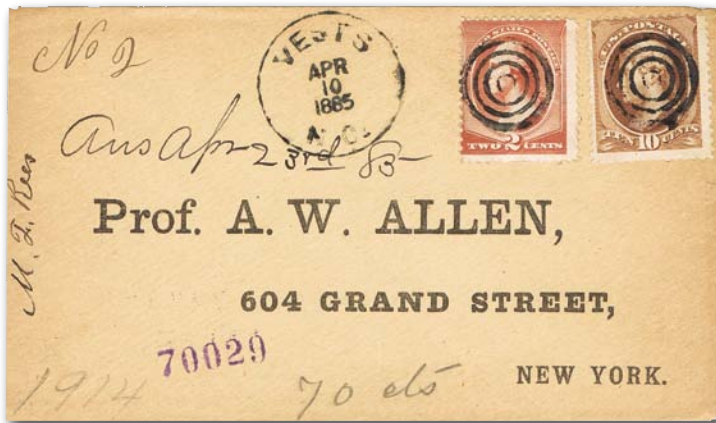
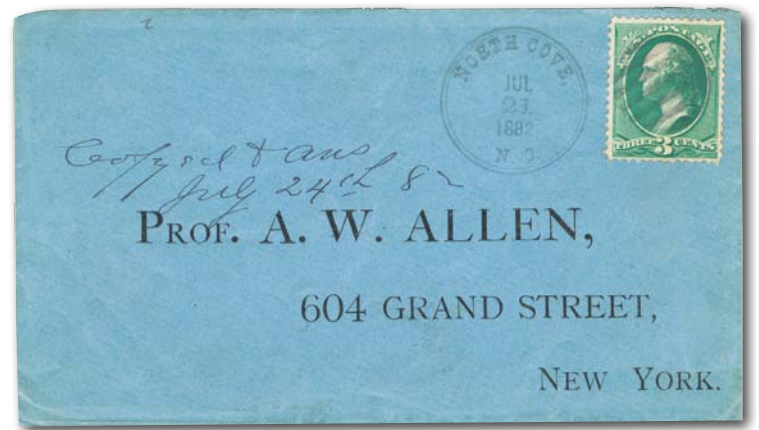
A second letter mailed on April 10, 1885 to Professor Allen from Vests is shown in Figure 2. The Vests post office, located in Cherokee county, was in operation from 1875 until 1950. The cover was postmarked with 27.5 mm circular date stamp and a 18 mm target cancel was used to cancel the stamps. This letter was mailed as a registered letter and paid the 2¢ first-class rate plus an additional 10¢ for the registry service. The 10¢ provide no indemnity for the letter's contents, it only provided for tracking of the letter. The notation in pencil at the center bottom of the cover indicates it contained 70¢. This may have been used to purchase a treatment from Professor Allen. The manuscript "No 2" marking in the upper left corner of the cover shows the letter was assigned registration number 2. This indicates it was the second registered letter mailed from Vests during April 1885. The handstamp "70029" in the lower left is the control number assigned to the letter by the New York post office. The cover also has a pen notion by Professor Allen's office indicating the letter was answered on April 23, 1885.

Patent medicine producers, such as Professor Allen, became much less common in the 20th century with the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906 which required inspection of products and that ingredient listings be placed on the product label. ■

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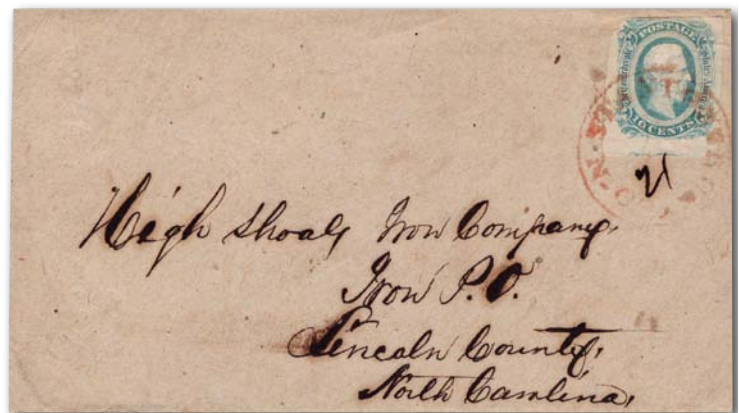
Figure 1. ▶
July 21, 1882, cover mailed from North Cove (McDowell County) to New York City. The 3¢ stamp paid the first-class rate in effect at the time. The 28 mm double-rimmed circular datestamp with a grid cancel was unreported previously. Professor Allen's office indicating the letter was answered on July 24, 1882.



◀ **Figure 2.** April 10, 1885, cover mailed from Vests (Cherokee county) to New York City. The 2¢ stamp paid the first-class rate in effect at the time and the 10¢ stamp paid for the registry service but no indemnity. The manuscript "No 2" in the upper left corner shows the letter was assigned registration number 2, indicating it was the second registered letter mailed from Vests during April 1885.

New Marking

Tony Crumbley submitted this cover to correct an error in the Stantonburg (Edgecombe County) listing of the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* on our website. The catalog listing shows this is a Type 1 postmark, used during the Confederate period in "Black?" ink. This example clearly shows that the ink color was red, not black.



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